

# FRANK CARANO INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

LEVINE: Good Afternoon. My name is Joanna Lee Levine and I am currently a third year student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Today is Thursday, November 9, 2000. It is 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I am going to interview Frank Carano in his home in Philadelphia. Mr. Carano, shall we get started?<sup>1</sup>

LEVINE: When and where were you born?

CARANO: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

LEVINE: So you were born and bred in Philly?

CARANO: Yes

LEVINE: What part of Philadelphia did you grow up in?

CARANO: The Overbrook area.

LEVINE: What was it like to grow up in Philadelphia in the early 1900s?

CARANO: What was it like? Well it was less congested than it is now. I don't quite understand your question. In what respect?

LEVINE: Well, what do you remember as the best of times during your childhood in Philadelphia?

CARANO: Of course there were no automobiles to speak of at that time, we had lots of horses (laughing) and bicycles but very few automobiles. And there was plenty of open space as opposed to now. There is very little.

LEVINE: Did you live in the Overbrook area during your whole childhood?

CARANO: I lived in the Overbrook area until I went into the army in 1941 and when I came out of the army I went to live in Germantown.

LEVINE: Where were your parents born?

CARANO: My father was born in Rome and my mother was born about 60 miles from Rome in what is known as the Abruzzi area.

LEVINE: When did they come to the United States?

CARANO: They came here about 1907

LEVINE: What prompted them to come?

CARANO: Well like many people in Italy and Ireland and other places in Europe, there was very little work there and they came here to savor the American dream. And when they came here of course they were broke (laughter) and eventually they did well and were able to send three of us to college.

LEVINE: What did your parents do?

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, there is no sound on this portion of the tape. It has to be redone. I have recreated what I said from my notes.

CARANO: Well, my mother was a housewife of course and she raised 5 children. My father was a cabinetmaker in Italy but when he came here he went into the food business and he opened a "Superette" they would call it and they sold groceries and meats and later on he opened a second one.

LEVINE: Where in Philadelphia did he open these "Superettes"?

CARANO: Always in the Overbrook area.

LEVINE: How did your parents describe their experience moving from Italy to the United States?

CARANO: Oh it was devastating. They couldn't speak the language, they were poor (laughter) and they brought 3 children here. They had 3 children in Italy and it was difficult for them of course at the beginning.

LEVINE: You had 4 brothers and sisters?

CARANO: I had 3 brothers, no excuse me, 2 brothers and 4 sisters. There were really 6 of us.

LEVINE: Are they older or younger than yourself?

CARANO: Well I have one sister that is younger than I am and one sister who is older and the others have departed this life.

LEVINE: Where do your sisters live now?

CARANO: My 2 sisters are widowed and they live together in Avalon, NJ.

LEVINE: What do your sisters do or what did they do? And what did the rest of your siblings do?

CARANO: Well one sister was a professor of English in the NJ system and the other was a paralegal.

LEVINE: What did your other siblings do while they were alive?

CARANO: Mostly, well the 2 other siblings were housewives and my brother ran one of the supermarkets.

LEVINE: When you were growing up did you help your dad in the supermarket?

CARANO: I started about the age of 12 (laughing) to deliver orders and clean up the place and do all of the chores that a 12 year old would be taught to do.

LEVINE: You were just a young boy during the First World War . . .

CARANO: Pardon?

LEVINE: You were just a young boy during the First World War. What if anything do you remember about World War I?

CARANO: Of course I was just a tot then but I do remember a lot of the songs they had then. (Singing) "Over there, Over there." I remember we sent a lot of troops there and I remember there were great casualties and that sort of thing.

LEVINE: Who were your role models during your childhood?

CARANO: Well one of my role models was Adrienne Bonnelly who was an immigration expert and he was in fact responsible for my deciding to study law. When I was in highschool I went to his office as an office boy and then after I finished law school I served a clerkship with him, which was then known as a preceptorship. And he was one of my role models. I also had another role model, a Judge Eugene v. Alencindrone<sup>2</sup> who was in the common pleas court and a very distinguished judge. He was considered one of the best.

LEVINE: What sort of work did you do for Mr. Bonnelly as an office boy?

CARANO: Well I would run errands and I would go to court with him and I would do some research with him when he went to the library to prepare a brief and the usual things that an office boy would do.

LEVINE: You mentioned that you clerked with him as part of the preceptorship program?

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: Can you tell me a little bit about what the preceptorship program was?

CARANO: Yes. When I came to the Bar and for at least 20 years after that there was a system where you would, after you pass the bar, serve 6 months in the office of a practicing attorney or a law firm and you would indoctrinate yourself so to speak into what the practice of law was all about because in law school as you know we learned a lot of principals but very little practice, aside from the moot court arguments. And I found that very interesting and very rewarding and I wish they would bring that system back.

LEVINE: It sounds helpful.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: You mentioned that your parents spoke Italian. What foreign languages do you speak?

CARANO: Well, I speak Italian because I learned Italian from my parents and then when I went to the University of Pennsylvania I studied Italian for 4 years with Dr. Vittorini, Professor Vittorini. I also speak Spanish which I learned initially in high school. I also speak some French but not as fluently as the other 2 languages. And of course I had to study Latin. At that time it was obligatory to study Latin AND Greek.

LEVINE: When did you study Latin and Greek?

CARANO: In high school. That would be about 1926, 27.

LEVINE: How has this knowledge of languages helped you in your practice of law?

CARANO: Well, it has been extremely helpful to me because many people whom I knew and many people in the area where I lived spoke very little English and they had to go to someone with whom they could communicate and I had a lot of clients because I knew Italian and a lot of clients because I knew Spanish. And in addition, many of my classmates and friends who were lawyers would send clients to me with whom they couldn't communicate because they didn't know Spanish or Italian. And also and probably most important was the fact that the Italian Government, knowing that I spoke Italian engaged me as their General Counsel and I have been counsel to the Italian government for the last approximately 40 years and still represent them.

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<sup>2</sup> I am not sure if this is spelled correctly.



LEVINE: I am going to ask you more questions about your position as general counsel for the Italian government a little later, um , but I also wanted to ask you how many other families in Overbrook were Italian Americans.

CARANO: Oh, I would say there were thousands. It was a pocket of Italians in the Overbrook area. They congregated there because they could speak to each other in Italian. Many of them, I repeat did not know any or very little English and they naturally would gravitate to people with whom they could communicate. I would say thousands.

LEVINE: Let's move on to your college years.

CARANO: Beg your pardon?

LEVINE: Let's move on to your college years. Why and when did you decide to go to college?

CARANO: Well, this attorney, whom I mentioned before, Adrienne Bonnelly, was a very close friend of my fathers and he came to visit us frequently. And it was he who got me interested in the law. He told my father that he thought I could adjust to being a lawyer and that's how I came to go to Penn undergraduate school with the intention of course of going to the law school.

LEVINE: What did you major in in college?

CARANO: Beg pardon?

LEVINE: What was your major in college?

CARANO: English, Spanish and Italian and Latin.

LEVINE: That's a lot of majors. What activities were you involved in during college?

CARANO: In college, I was in the debating team, I played some football. I wasn't too good at it (laughing). I played some baseball. Oh, I did some acting. When the Spanish professor whose name was Pasquale Seneca, just like the great Seneca of the Roman period, he taught Spanish there for many years. He also taught Italian. He asked me if I would take part in a play. And I said, well, I haven't done any acting and I said I don't know whether I would be good enough. He said well you don't have to know acting too much, just because you know Spanish that would be sufficient because the purpose of the plays was to introduce Spanish to the community. So I took part in a Spanish play and later on, Professor Vittorini got me interested in 3 Italian plays. And I took part in 3 Italian plays at Penn.

LEVINE: After college, did you pursue acting any further?

CARANO: No (laughing). No. I thought I had done enough ham acting in college.

LEVINE: What was your favorite part?

CARANO: My favorite part? Oh I was always the leading man. I wouldn't have settled for anything less (laughing).

LEVINE: You said that some of your other siblings went to college?

CARANO: Yes. My sister Josephine. She was the teacher and my sister Mildred, she also went to college.



LEVINE: What college did they attend?

CARANO: They went to Temple. Not as great as Penn. But they've developed a great deal, they even have a good law school.

LEVINE: Yes they do. The stock market crash known as Black Tuesday happened while you were in college.

CARANO: Yes. It happened when I was in college and that's the period when people were jumping out of windows from skyscrapers and it was a mess. I was in college at the time.

LEVINE: What do you remember about that day, if anything?

CARANO: I can't say that I remember anything particularly about that day, but there was an extended period of terrible economic crisis and that's of course when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president.

LEVINE: How were you able to put yourself through law school during the depression?

CARANO: Well, my father took care of that and it was only \$400 a year then. And now I understand it's about \$25,000 or more.

LEVINE: More (laughing). How else did the depression affect you and your family?

CARANO: Really it didn't affect us because we had a meat and grocery store and we were able to eat at the least. We ate well and my father did well and I would say that it really didn't affect us too much.

LEVINE: When you applied to the University of Pennsylvania Law School, what was the admissions process like?

CARANO: Well of course we had to file an application and then we were interviewed by a gentleman named Register. And of course they had to check our grades in high school and that's about it. I think it was much easier to get into the law school then than it is now.

LEVINE: What do you remember about being a first year student at the law school?

CARANO: I remember very vividly that one of the professors said look at the fellow next to you on your left and look at the fellow on your right and we are going to end up with only one of you finishing the law school. And I remember also that we only had 4 girls in our two classes. We had 2 classes of one hundred each. And those 4 girls were very bright and they all passed and they did very well in practice because I came in contact with them repeatedly.

LEVINE: Of the 200 law students in your first year class, how many graduated?

CARANO: One hundred.

LEVINE: Wow.

CARANO: The professor who prognosticated was accurate (laughing)!

LEVINE: you said that there were 4 women in your class. How many racial minorities were there, if any, in your class?

CARANO: None.

LEVINE: How many students were from working class backgrounds?

CARANO: I would say most of them.

LEVINE: How many other Italian American students?

CARANO: In my class?

LEVINE: In your class.

CARANO: 2 that I remember. One from Wilkes-Barre and one from Toms River NJ.

LEVINE: Were there any Italian American faculty members at the law school?

CARANO: No.

LEVINE: What professor at the law school had the greatest influence on you?

CARANO: I would say Dean Michael. He was the dean and he taught criminal law and he was really wonderful.

LEVINE: How did he influence you?

CARANO: Well, it's hard to say but I felt that he influenced me more than anybody else.

LEVINE: What was your favorite class?

CARANO: My favorite class? I would say torts. That was taught by Francis H. Bolan who eventually ran for the U.S. Senate but was defeated. But he was truly a fine professor.

LEVINE: How come torts was your favorite class?

CARANO: Hmm?

LEVINE: How come torts was your favorite class?

CARANO: I don't know, I suppose the factual situations in torts were more interesting.

LEVINE: That's true. What was your least favorite class?

CARANO: Constitutional law. (laughing). That's so nebulous, we never knew what the law was.

LEVINE: What did you like most about law school?

CARANO: Oh I liked everything about law school. I liked exposure to wonderful professors and excellent students and I felt that I was developing considerably by studying law.

LEVINE: Were you on any journals?

CARANO: Beg your pardon?

LEVINE: Were you on any journals at the law school?

CARANO: No.

LEVINE: How do you think law school has changed since you attended?

CARANO: Well of course the law school has expanded considerably and I think that it has changed for the better. I think that we have gotten a lot of fine professors in the law school. And we are getting more of them. And I hope eventually to fund a professorship at Penn.

LEVINE: How exciting. You actually met your partner who you started a practice with at law school.

CARANO: Yes. He and I sat next to each other. We became very good friends. We studied together 3 years in the law school and when we were graduated and became lawyers, passed the bar, we started to practice together. Of course there wasn't much practicing to do because we were in the heart of the depression. But anyway, we started out and we did a lot of pro bono work; practically all of it was pro bono. But eventually those people for whom we did the pro bono came to us when they had good cases. And my partner was Milton H. Kunken and we were together more than 50 years in practice.

LEVINE: Tell me a little bit more about your relationship with Mr. Kunken and your practice.

CARANO: I'll put it this way. I did not like research, I did not like preparing briefs, I did not like going to the library and finding out what the law was and he did. He liked that kind of work. I liked trial work which I did all through my practice. And we agreed that he would take care of all the office work and as we progressed we had several assistants and he took care of them, of guiding them and I went to court every day practically.

LEVINE: Sounds like a good match.

CARANO: It was (laughing). It was a wonderful match.

LEVINE: Do you remember exactly at what point in law school you two decided to practice together?

CARANO: I don't think we really thought about practicing when we were in law school. I think we were more intent on getting through law school and the bars and practice came later.

LEVINE: Tell me what taking the bar was like when you took it?

CARANO: They were tough. I understand . . . well my recollection is that less than 50% passed the first time and many students had to take them at least 2 or 3 times and some of them never made it. Milton and I were fortunate, we got through the first time.

LEVINE: That must have felt like a great sense of accomplishment.

CARANO: It sure was. (laughing).

LEVINE: Your colleague the Honorable Jerome A. O'Neil spoke of you as a one man Legal Aid Society and Public Defender and he said that your door was never closed to those who could not afford your services during the depression.

CARANO: That's true.

LEVINE: You said before also that you took on some pro bono cases. What kind of cases were they during the depression?



CARANO: Oh . . . Well we prepared some wills, there were some accident cases or personal injury. People that wanted information on property they had in Italy among the Italians. Oh we had an OPA it was called, Office of Price Administration. It was an agency created by Roosevelt and we also had Rent control and we had clients that came to us for the interpretation of what those laws were all about. And that's the kind of non-monetary producing cases that we had (laughing).

LEVINE: What kind of monetary producing cases did you get during the Depression?

CARANO: Well at the beginning we got very little. We would draw a will for \$10. And now at least you would charge \$100, maybe \$200. Personal injury cases of course they were ok, we made some money on those. And its funny but many of my clients, instead of money because they didn't have it, would bring me fruit and garden products which they grew and some of them brought me rabbits and half of a deer and that kind of money producing . . .(laughing).

LEVINE: So you ate well.

CARANO: We always ate well.

LEVINE: When you started practicing law, you performed a lot of public service because of the depression. What was the sentiment among attorneys in the private sector about performing public service by providing legal services at that time?

CARANO: Well I think they were pretty much in the same position we were. Some of them were looking to get a position with a firm – not too many. The firms were very small at that time. The firms that now have maybe 300 or 400 members were like maybe 10 or 15. And therefore they couldn't hire many people and most of them were relegated to what we were doing, hoping to get some cases and some of them left the law for the time being and went into something else.

LEVINE: What do you think a lawyer's obligation to perform public service should be?

CARANO: I don't quite understand your question.

LEVINE: Lots of times lawyers have a small requirement to do some pro bono work of the type that you did during the depression, what kind of obligation do you think lawyers in private practice should have to do that kind of pro bono work?

CARANO: Oh I think that they should have a great feeling for and they should do a lot of pro bono work. I have always been of the opinion that law is not merely to make money but it's a service that has to be performed. I think we are getting away from that now. But when I came to the Bar that was the feeling we all had.

LEVINE: In addition to the pro bono work that you did, you practiced a lot of immigration law.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: How did you come to practice immigration law and develop an expertise in that area?

CARANO: As I said before, my mentor was Adrian Bonnell who by the way became the president of the Family Court and he taught me immigration law and I liked it because I was helping people. As a matter of fact, in 1961 I had a private audience with Pope John the 21<sup>st</sup> I think it was and he commended me for bringing families together.

LEVINE: Can you tell me how the immigration laws in the United States at the time made it difficult to reunite families?

CARANO: Yes. They had a quota system at that time and the quota system was based on the percentage of people that were in the United States and that was discriminatory against southern Europeans. As a matter of fact, in one year, there were not more than 5,200 Italians could emigrate to the United States whereas from England and the northern countries they had as much as 60,000 in one year and gradually that was eliminated and all of the countries were given the same consideration.

LEVINE: What's your most memorable story about reuniting a family?

CARANO: Well I had several where people were about to be deported and I was able to get a stay of deportation and those people became very successful. They remained here and became very successful.

LEVINE: Did you work mostly with Italian families?

CARANO: Mostly with Italian families, though not exclusively.

LEVINE: Recently the Immigration Act of 1990 was passed, are you familiar with that act?

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: How do you think that act has affected reunification of families?

CARANO: Well I think that even laws before the act of 1990 reunification of families was pretty well taken care of. I think what the act of 1990 did particularly was to allow people who had expertise in certain work, they were admitted in greater number and some of the bars were lifted as to those people. But the families were pretty well taken care of.

LEVINE: What do you think the most significant developments in immigration law were?

CARANO: The most significant. Well that's very difficult to say because it was a gradual process every few years or every five years or so they would change the laws in the right direction.

LEVINE: Do you think we are still going in the right direction?

CARANO: Now? I would say so there are still some laws that can be modified but I think essentially we are on the right track.

LEVINE: In addition to developing an expertise in immigration law, you developed an expertise in international law as well. You mentioned before that you acted as general counsel to the Italian government for the past 42 years.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: How did you come to represent them?

CARANO: Well, the Italian consul at that time, it was 1957 – I remember it well, was looking for an attorney because he did not have an attorney. I think that the attorney that had represented the Italian government went into something else and he was looking for an attorney that spoke Italian and knew Italian and someone suggested my name and he called me in and got together and of course since then there have been about 10 consuls.

They change consuls every approximately 4 years and during all that time I represented the Italian government.

LEVINE: What kind of cases or work did you do for them?

CARANO: Practically everything but mostly decedents estates. People who died here and had heirs in Italy had to have their estates administered and money sent to Italy that was the primary area. But there are others too. There have been some criminal cases, people come here who are aliens, commit crimes and they got to be represented, so I got into criminal law occasionally. And other matters too. Italian citizenship, we now have dual citizenship – you can have Italian citizenship and American citizenship. That sort of thing.

LEVINE: Today its common for lawyers to practice international law. How common was it when you first started practicing for a lawyer to practice international law?

CARANO: Not as common as it is now because the world is shrinking and we get into problems one country in another and so on but in those days there wasn't that much international law. Now we have law firms that have offices in different countries.

LEVINE: What were some of the difficulties of representing the Italian government, if there were any?

CARANO: I didn't find any difficulty. In fact I thought it was pretty much the same because most of the activity was in the United States and the laws of the United States were applicable to the problems people faced.

LEVINE: Can you tell me your favorite or most memorable case that you worked on on behalf of the Italian Government?

CARANO: What?

LEVINE: Your most memorable case that you worked on on the Italian government's behalf?

CARANO: Well, there was one case, it was a . . . I'm trying to think of one which was outstanding. Well one of the cases was very outstanding. There was a deportation case of a fellow who had committed a heinous crime in this country and the United States wanted to deport him as they should have. And the Italian government resisted it because this fellow came here at the age of 1 or 2 and he committed these crimes – there were several crimes – he committed these crimes here and they didn't feel that they wanted to take back a fellow who was a criminal. And so they refused to take him so he stayed in jail. (laughing) As well he should.

LEVINE: How often did you practice criminal law?

CARANO: How often? Well mostly my criminal cases were appointments by judges, that also was pretty much pro bono because the compensation was very minimal. But I did get 8 murder appointments from judges. And after the 8<sup>th</sup>, I called my friends on the bench and I said please don't send me any more murder appointments. (laughing). They're a great responsibility and they take too much out of you.

LEVINE: How are you involved in the Philadelphia Bar Association?

CARANO: Well I was always active in the Bar. In my early days at the bar, I was in the citizenship committee, unauthorized practice of law and several other committees but the most important was I was on the Committee of Censors which was the precursor of our present



disciplinary board. And I was on that for 3 years and I was chairman in my third year and then I went on the disciplinary board for 6 more years and I was chairman of that committee for three years and that too I was glad to get rid of (laughing). It was an awesome responsibility.

LEVINE: What kinds of cases or situations were you faced with when you were a member of these committees?

CARANO: Well we had various types of infractions. We had lawyers who never responded to their clients, never answered phone calls, never answered letters. We had a couple of cases where lawyers misappropriated funds and in those cases we recommended disbarment and then we had a whole series of varying infractions. Some lawyers, and I guess they still do, would run cases, as they call it. When an accident happened they would send somebody to get the case and of course that's improper and we had to discipline people like that. There are different kinds of disciplinary measures. Some were we just gave them and admonishment and some we suspended for a while and some we disbarred.

LEVINE: How do you think attorney discipline impacts the relationship between the legal profession and society as a whole?

CARANO: I don't quite understand the question.

LEVINE: Well, how important do you think the disciplining of attorneys is in order to promote a good relationship between the legal profession and society as a whole? Give it a good image to the outsiders?

CARANO: Well, as we all know, unfortunately, the attorneys don't have the greatest image with the public and I think much of that is not warranted because we are entrusted with the most important activities of a person's life from the cradle to the grave. Of course, some lawyers are bad boys and bad girls and they do things they shouldn't do and that's why we have the disciplinary board. But I think that the image of the attorney today has improved some. I hope it continues.

LEVINE: How do you think the nature of the problems faced by attorneys and regulation of attorneys has changed over the years?

CARANO: I don't quite understand that.

LEVINE: Well you were a member of the committee of censors and the disciplinary board hearing committee.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: And you saw a number of attorneys who have done improper things.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: How are the improper things that attorneys have done today, how is that different today?

CARANO: I can't answer that because I have been off the disciplinary board for a long time now and I would imagine that I hope that they have improved. That's all I can say about that. But I don't know definitely.

LEVINE: In 1987, your firm merged with Mattioni, Mattioni & Mattioni?

CARANO: 1987, yes.

LEVINE: What prompted that merger?

CARANO: 2 of my partners decided that I was working too hard, going into court almost daily and I wanted to take it a little easier. So I knew the Mattioni boys, there are 5 of them, 5 brothers and 3 nephews all in the firm, and we had a nice relationship and we got together and worked out a plan and I pretty much stopped my court work. And that's the reason. I wanted to take it easier.

LEVINE: Have you been actually taking it easy?

CARANO: (Laughing) Yes. I honestly must say I have taken it easier. Just eliminating the court work was a big step. But I still practice law to a limited extent but I don't go to court.

LEVINE: But you do travel?

CARANO: I love to travel. I think my forebearers were gypsies because one thing I love is to travel and I have traveled all over Europe and I have been to Italy more than 100 times.

LEVINE: What's your favorite part of Italy?

CARANO: My favorite city in Italy is Florence. My second favorite is Venice. My third is Rome but I love all of Italy. It's a beautiful country.

LEVINE: Yes it is. During World War II from 1943-45 you served in the military?

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: What branch of the armed forces?

CARANO: I was going to intelligence school and unfortunately I suffered a serious accident as did 12 other of my buddies and I was very seriously injured including a comminuted fracture of my pelvis, fractured leg and other injuries so that was the end of my intelligence course and then the war ended and they sent me home (laughing).

LEVINE: Where were you stationed?

CARANO: I was stationed in Camp Blanding Florida.

LEVINE: Was your injury suffered in the course of duty?

CARANO: Oh yes. Yes. An army truck ran over me. Me and 12 or 13 other of my buddies.

LEVINE: How did that happen?

CARANO: Well we were, this was 3 o'clock in the morning and all of the lights were out because we were simulating actual war conditions and this truck didn't have any lights on and he just ran over us.

LEVINE: That's terrible.

CARANO: (Laughing) It is terrible.

LEVINE: Aside from serving in the military, how did World War II impact your life?

CARANO: Well I had to leave my practice but fortunately the office remained open because Mr. Kunken had a disability which forbade him from going into the army and he kept the office going but of course it wasn't the same.

LEVINE: Did you enlist in the military or were you drafted?

CARANO: No, I was drafted.

LEVINE: As an immigration lawyer, how did you feel about the Japanese Internment camps that existed during World War II?

CARANO: (Laughing) I'd rather not say.

LEVINE: Okay.

CARANO: (Laughing) That's a delicate subject.

LEVINE: In addition to representing the Italian government, you've been honored 4 times by the Republic of Italy for promoting good relations between the U.S. and Italy, your latest award being that of Grand Officiale, the highest honor bestowed by the Italian government.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: Exactly what kinds of work did you do to receive these honors?

CARANO: I did many things. One of them and very important, I thought was the exchange of culture between the 2 countries. Also I was instrumental in raising enormous funds for the reconstruction of Italy and for example I was one of the founders of the America Italy society which is a purely cultural organization and we had as an adjunct to the America Italy Society the emeritus string ensemble. And this ensemble went to all parts of Italy, many parts of Europe – France, England – and gave concerts there. This was part of the interchange of culture.

LEVINE: How did you get involved in that?

CARANO: Well the Italian consul, in 1957, the one who engaged me, called me one day and send I want to have lunch with you and he said that there was an organization in California called the America Italy Society and he said I think it would be nice if we had an adjunct in Philadelphia. And he got together some of the most prominent Philadelphians to form this organization and Mrs. Annenberg was one of them, Professor Vittorini was another, Professor Struni was another. They're all very talented people and that's how we formed the America Italy Society. Incidentally, the America Italy Society has 22 classes which teach Italian right now.

LEVINE: In Philadelphia?

CARANO: In Philadelphia at 1420 Walnut Street which was right next door to my office.

LEVINE: Your office of Carano & Kunken?

CARANO: The office of Carano & Kunken where we had our office for about 30 years.

LEVINE: Can you tell me a little more about the work you did involving the reconstruction of post-war Italy?



CARANO: Yes. I raised, as I said before, a lot of money among my friends and among people who loved Italy. We call them Italophiles. And we sent the money to these war torn areas to reconstruct the damage done by the bombing and war in general. And I did that not once but many times. They also had earthquakes and floods in the northern part. The Po river flowed over and did a tremendous amount of damage. I raised funds for that also. I was on the radio and television urging people to cough up (laughing) contribute.

LEVINE: As we were just talking about, you were involved in many cultural organizations both locally and internationally. What is your view of the duty of attorneys to make a contribution to the legal profession as well as to society? How involved do you think attorneys should get in cultural organizations especially local cultural organizations?

CARANO: Well I think the attorneys should. Culture is a very integral part of our lives and many lawyers I don't think realize that. And I think that if they did appreciate the value of culture they would participate more and join the ranks of those who do.

LEVINE: How common was it in the 1930s, 40s and 50s for attorneys to be involved in these types of cultural organizations?

CARANO: I don't think there was much involvement because they were struggling to make a living and usually culture goes along with affluence to some extent. There are a lot of poor people who are more cultured than the rich people. But if you are rich, you can afford to expose yourself to culture.

LEVINE: When do you think more attorneys started getting involved in these organizations?

CARANO: What should they do?

LEVINE: When did you start to see more attorneys getting involved in these cultural organizations?

CARANO: I would say in the last 25 years.

LEVINE: So you were sort of a pioneer.

CARANO: Well, I think I attribute that to a great extent to my wife. She went to Curtis Institute and she studied in Italy for 2 years, studied voice and she was very culturally oriented and to that extent she had a great influence on me.

LEVINE: How did you meet her?

CARANO: Its funny, she was singing at a radio station and I went there to make a speech and we met and I dated her and then we married.

LEVINE: What was her name?

CARANO: Gina.

LEVINE: That's a beautiful name.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: Was she from Italy also?

CARANO: She was born in Italy, she was born near Rome and came here at the age of 13 and of course, she was always willing to jump in a plane and go back there all the time (laughing). And my work afforded her and me the opportunity.

LEVINE: Did you ever consider moving to Italy permanently?

CARANO: No. Never.

LEVINE: How come?

CARANO: Well, I think this is the greatest country in the world. I love to visit other countries but after 3 or 4 weeks I want to come back.

LEVINE: Did you and your wife have any children?

CARANO: No.

LEVINE: You were also involved in founding the Justinian society?

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: Can you tell me about that? What were its purposes?

CARANO: Sure. The Justinian society is an organization consisting of all lawyers who have an Italian background. They took the name Justinian because he was the great law giver centuries ago and when I helped found it, my goodness, that was at least 40 years ago, there were only about I guess not more than 20 lawyers of Italian background. Now I understand there are about 400 and it's a very potent organization in the Bar. A fellow named Primavera is going to be our next chancellor or President and now I see Gabe Bevilacqua wants to be vice chairman so they're very active and they are doing a good job I would say.

LEVINE: Can you tell me what your hobbies are?

CARANO: Number one is travel. That's why I say I must have gypsy blood in me. But I have others too. I did photography and when I went on trips I still do when I travel I take numerous photographs and I also take movies in my travels. I like reading good literature particularly the Old Masters can't think of anything else now but I think that's about it.

LEVINE: What's your favorite book?

CARANO: My favorite book? Oh there are so many of them! As I said before most of them are in the classics rather than modern literature. Plato and that sort of thing.

LEVINE: Did you ever get involved in politics?

CARANO: Once (laughing) when I was state chairman for Richard Nixon when he ran for President. One of my friends got me involved. I always shied away from politics. I thought it was inconsistent with being a good lawyer so I didn't get involved but I got caught this time. And I spent a lot of time and a lot of money campaigning for Nixon. Fortunately at that time he won. I say fortunately because of what happened to him later. But I would say that's my only brush with politics.

LEVINE: Speaking of politics, its 2 days after election day . . .

CARANO: (Laughing) And we still don't have a new president.

LEVINE: What do you think about that?

CARANO: I think its terrible. But these things happen.

LEVINE: What do you thinks going to happen? Any predictions?

CARANO: I would not want to predict. I have a feeling that Bush is going to win but I wouldn't bet on it. Its sort of a toss up.

LEVINE: That's true. Okay I have a final question for you. Actually I have one other question before that. What's your favorite Italian dish?

CARANO: (Laughing) I have to say honestly that there are many of them and I love Italian food but I have to keep away from it because it puts on too many pounds and I don't want to put on pounds. There are so many wonderful dishes. When I go to Italy . . . I've never had a bad meal in Italy. Of course we have a lot of fine Italian restaurants here now, many of them and they're cropping up all over the place. I like Chinese food too. And there are many Chinese foods opening up all over the city.

LEVINE: Philadelphia has a lot of restaurants.

CARANO: Yes.

LEVINE: Okay. This is the final question. What advice would you give a third year law student like myself whose about to graduate and start practicing law?

CARANO: Well, if I were as young as you and as attractive as you are, I don't think you'd need much advice (laughing). I would say that seriously now that was facetious. But seriously I would say that you should work hard because as the saying is everything yields to industry and if you work hard and you keep your powder dry you're bound to be a big success. And I predict that for you

LEVINE: Thank you. Thank you very much Mr. Carano.

CARANO: Thank you.